

Makor for High School

A teacher's guide for grades 9–12 · The Makor Project · makorproject.org/teachers-high-school · free, no login

You have a packed curriculum, thirty students, and limited time. This page hands you the plan: what to teach tomorrow, what a week looks like, and where single Chapters fit the courses you already teach, AP included.

Makor is a free online textbook of Jewish history, and the history of antisemitism, built from primary sources and written at high-school level, grades 9–12, with no adaptation needed. Everything below prints, and nothing requires a login.

I have one class period

A fully planned 40-minute lesson.
Prep: read one page.

I have one week

Five Chapters, five days, one story:
the lie, the laws, the machinery, the
response, the aftermath.

I want Chapters inside my course

A chart from Global History to ELA,
one lesson at a time.

THREE FACTS

Why would I teach this?

- **Your state likely requires it.** More than twenty-five states now mandate Holocaust education, most of them in the high-school years. The requirement usually arrives without a curriculum. Building one is left to you.
- **Your students have already met the subject.** Antisemitism usually reaches them online before any teacher reaches them with the history.
- **It fits courses you already teach.** The same history runs through Global History, U.S. History, government, and ELA. The chart below shows where each Chapter fits.

YES. HERE IS WHY.

Am I qualified to teach this?

If you teach social studies, world history, U.S. history, government, or ELA in grades 9–12, in a public, private, or religious school, yes. You do not need to be a specialist. Every page assumes the reader starts from zero: terms are defined, events are dated, people are introduced. If you can assign a reading and lead a discussion, you can teach this.

NOT A NEW COURSE

Where does it fit what I already teach?

Makor slots into the courses you already have. The five-day unit below fits any Holocaust or WWII unit. And most courses in a high-school program have Chapters that fit inside them as single lessons:

IF YOU ARE TEACHING	ADD THIS CHAPTER
Global History: the ancient world	The Land of Israel, The First and Second Temples, The Diaspora · the Israelite kingdoms, Jerusalem under Greece and Rome, and the Greek-speaking Jewish world, with The Continuous Jewish Presence for the archaeological record
Global History: belief systems	Who Are the Jews?, The Sacred Texts, Ritual Objects, The Jewish Life Cycle · a people, its texts, and its practices, taught like any tradition, and Nostra Aetate for how a teaching was formally repudiated
Global History: the medieval world	Adversus Judaeos, The Blood Libel, The Ghetto System, The Expulsions, The Dhimma · the teaching, the libel, the walls, the removals, and the parallel record under Islam, with Rashi and Maimonides for the life and scholarship inside those centuries
Global History: the Enlightenment and emancipation	Moses Mendelssohn · the Enlightenment argued through one philosopher's life
Global History: nationalism and empire	The Racial Turn, The Russian Pogroms, Theodor Herzl · hostility rebuilt on race, the violence that followed, and the national movement born in answer
Global History: WWII and the Holocaust	The five-day unit below, or any of Unit 4's seven Chapters at full depth
U.S. History: immigration and industry	Emma Lazarus, American Jewry · immigration history through one people's story
U.S. History: the twentieth century	The Founders of Hollywood, Albert Einstein, Jonas Salk · the studios, the physicist the Nazis drove out, and the developer of the first polio vaccine
U.S. History: the Cold War	Soviet Jewry · the movement that made Jewish emigration an American cause
Global History: the modern Middle East	The Departure from MENA, The Modern State of Israel · the region's twentieth century through one people's documented record, with community histories from Iraq, Iran, and North Africa
Government and civics	The Postwar Trials, Postwar Restitution, The Legal Record · how law and public memory answered, from Nuremberg to this quarter's register, with The Memory Architecture for how remembrance became law
Media literacy	The Protocols, The Eastward Turn, Holocaust Denial & the Response, The Afterlife of the Image, Hate Symbols, Misconceptions · how a lie is built, translated, denied, pictured, and checked
ELA	Every Chapter is document-based reading practice, aligned to the Common Core literacy-in-history standards (the RH strand). Hannah Arendt and Emma Lazarus pair with essays and poetry units
Current events	The Terror Record, Contemporary Antisemitism, It Didn't End · the present, documented as it occurs
AP courses	The same fits, matched to period: AP World History: Modern (from 1200) and AP European History (from 1450) take the medieval and modern rows from those dates forward. AP U.S. History takes the three U.S. rows; AP U.S. Government's civil-liberties unit pairs with the Government and civics row. And AP Art History

IF YOU ARE TEACHING	ADD THIS CHAPTER
	can use the Museum for the unfamiliar-work analysis its exam requires: coins and carved inscriptions from the ancient Mediterranean, illuminated manuscripts and cathedral sculpture from medieval Europe, an illuminated Ottoman ketubah, the printed page of the Bomberg Talmud, each credited to the institution that holds it. Every Chapter is document-based, the skill the AP history exams test in the DBQ, the document-based question
An existing elective	A Holocaust or genocide-studies course already on the books can take Unit 4 as its text, then add the before and the after: Unit 3 for the roots and Unit 6 for the aftermath
An elective of its own	A full semester plan, week by week, is on the Sample Syllabi page · an option beside the integrations above, not instead of them

The chart lists the strongest fits, not all of them: every one of the 57 Chapters names its courses and standards codes in Classroom Connections, so the alignment work is already done, and the [Table of Contents](#) maps them all.

ONE CLASS PERIOD, FULLY PLANNED

What do I teach tomorrow?

Teach this one first: **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**, the forged “minutes” of a Jewish plot to rule the world, exposed in 1921 and circulating online still. It meets students exactly where the subject already found them, and it answers with method: how historians take a lie apart. The Chapter’s side-by-side table is the lesson’s engine.

ONE CLASS PERIOD, NO PREPARATION BEYOND READING THE PAGE

Before class. Open the Chapter. Read it once. Press “Open PDF” if you want handouts. That is the whole prep.

First 5 minutes. Put the Chapter’s side-by-side table on the board: two passages, forty years apart, nearly word for word. One is an 1864 French satire that never mentions Jews. Ask what students conclude.

Next 15 minutes. Read two sections together, “A fabricated text presented as authentic” and “Philip Graves and the establishment of the fraud.” Students mark every checkable fact.

Next 15 minutes. Discussion question 1, straight from the page: why is a textual match stronger evidence of forgery than an expert simply declaring it false? Then the harder one: why did it keep spreading anyway?

Last 5 minutes. Exit ticket: “Name one documented fact you would show someone who shared the Protocols online.” Every answer is checkable on the page.

That is one complete lesson, and it doubles as media literacy. If it works for your room, the week below extends it.

FIVE DAYS, ONE STORY

What if I have a week? The five-day unit.

Five Chapters, in an order that tells one story: the lie, the laws, the machinery, the response, the aftermath. Written at full depth for this band. Keep one question running through the week: why did it keep coming back? Every era gave a different reason for the same target. The reasons contradict each other. The target never changed. Students reach the conclusion on their own; **The Nazi Synthesis** holds the evidence on one page, and **the arc at a glance** holds the whole line.

- **Day 1 • The lie.** **The Protocols of the Elders of Zion**: the lesson above.
- **Day 2 • The laws.** **The Years Before the Killing, 1933–1939**: six years of laws, dated one by one.
- **Day 3 • The machinery.** **The Camp System**: the perpetrators’ own records, counted and dated.
- **Day 4 • The response.** **Jewish Resistance & Rescue**: the answer to a question students always ask.
- **Day 5 • The aftermath.** **Liberation & the Displaced**: the war ends and the story does not.

Short on days? Teach Days 1, 2, and 3. Have two weeks? Add [The Nazi Synthesis](#) before Day 2, and [The Postwar Trials](#) after Day 5.

THE SITE'S CLASSROOM TOOLS

What else can I use in class?

- **Timeline.** Project it as a warm-up, or have students place the day's lesson on it.
- **The Museum.** Manuscripts, coins, and objects. Papers can center on a single object.
- **Virtual Field Trips.** Archaeological sites, memorials, and historic Jewish quarters, from the projector; a natural pairing with an in-person visit where a collection is nearby.
- **Films.** Curated film and video by Unit, with grade bands marked.
- **The Legal Record.** Judgments, treaties, and statutes, each linked to its primary document. Built for civics.
- **The Recurring Cycle.** The mechanism behind the week's running question, named step by step.
- **Misconceptions.** Beliefs students bring to class, set beside the documented record.
- **Glossary.** Every term defined plainly.
- **Sample Syllabi.** The full elective plan, plus a college survey.

THE SECTION TO READ BEFORE YOU NEED IT

What if a parent or my principal pushes back?

The real fear is usually not the material. It is being accused of teaching a side. Here is why this material holds, and what to say if someone challenges you.

- **Every claim carries its source, on the page.** Dates, laws, and figures link to the archive or museum that holds the record. You are not asking anyone to trust you, or us. You are showing them a document.
- **The site documents; it does not argue.** Its standing rule is that the reader draws the conclusion. Contested questions are labeled contested. Where scholars disagree, the page says so and names them.
- **No political side is taken.** On the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the site says plainly that it is “a subject with legitimate arguments on both sides,” and it does not adjudicate it. You will not find an endorsement anywhere, of a party, a policy, or a position.
- **Hate texts are cited, never linked.** Students learn what a forgery like the Protocols did without the site ever sending anyone to read it.
- **The standards are public.** Every editorial rule the site follows is published at [Editorial Standards](#), and the Chapters in this guide name the state standards they support.
- **You can answer “who runs this site?”** The Makor Project is a free, independent educational resource. Its [About page](#) explains how it is built, and its [published standards](#) govern every page.

If a parent or administrator asks, you can say: “This lesson is built from primary documents, each linked to the institution that holds it, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem (Israel’s Holocaust memorial and archive), even the German state’s own federal archives. Here is the page. Every claim can be checked.”

And if a student repeats something antisemitic mid-lesson: put the document back on the screen and ask what it says. The site’s [Misconceptions](#) and [Hate Symbols](#) pages were built for exactly those moments. Each takes one claim, or one symbol, and sets the record beside it.

THE ANATOMY OF A CHAPTER

Quick answers

What is on a Chapter page?

- **A readable history**, written to be taught or assigned.
- **Primary sources and images**, with the holding institution named beneath each.
- **Discussion questions** that ask students to reason from the documents.
- **Classroom Connections:** the courses it fits and the standards it supports.
- **Key takeaways**, for review and exit tickets.
- **A printable PDF**, one button, the whole Chapter.

Is the reading level right? Yes. The site is written at high-school level; grades 9–12 are its native band. Teaching grades 6–8 instead? [Makor for Middle School](#) is the adaptation path.

Do I need approval to use this? That depends on your district’s materials policy. In many districts, supplemental materials for a course you already teach sit within a teacher’s discretion; in others, a principal or department signs off. Either way, this material is built to pass review: every claim sourced, standards named, editorial rules public. Adopting it as a core text, or building a course on it, goes through your school’s normal process, and the [Sample Syllabi](#) page carries an approval packet built for it. If your district’s web filter blocks the site, your IT office can unblock it; it is a free educational reference with published standards.

What does it cost, and how do I print? Nothing, ever, and no login. Every Chapter prints from its own “Open PDF” button. This guide itself is [a printable PDF](#), ready to hand a colleague. The [For Teachers hub](#) has the full Teacher Guide and a free professional-development course. Questions, or a story about how a lesson went: hello@makorproject.org. We read everything.

Start with the one lesson. The rest is here when you want it.